

words. He was on an inappropriate topic. And Mitt Romney certainly didn't rise to the occasion when he said they weren't the words he would have used. It wasn't an area that anybody should have brought up or even thought about.

Limbaugh said that the woman wanted to be paid for sex because she, in his thoughts, wanted contraception so she could have sex without the fear of pregnancy. It's funny, Rush Limbaugh never questioned anybody getting a vasectomy, for what's the use of a vasectomy, that's covered by insurance, but to have sex without the fear or possibility of pregnancy. He said because she wanted sex paid for by the taxpayers that he ought to be able to watch it. Well, I wonder if he wants to watch all the men who had vasectomies have their sex.

There's something wrong in the country, and the advertisers and the radio stations are responsible, and they need to take appropriate moral and ethical action and not continue to be accessories to the fact and support such trash.

CONTINUING IRANIAN THREAT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. ADAMS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor today to speak about the continuing Iranian threat to the United States and Israel.

Just as the President of Iran continues to spew his vile poison into the civil discourse of the United Nations, the regime of the Ayatollah issued a threat of violent aggression 2 weeks ago against Israel through the deputy head of the armed forces.

Through its actions, Iran has proven that it will never work with the peaceful nations of the world community. In fact, in yet another affront to diplomacy, Iran recently offered to allow inspectors from the IAEA into the country only to refuse them entry into the most important facilities to examine those nuclear sites in dispute.

The threat of a nuclear-armed Iran is not only a threat to Israel; it is also a direct threat to the United States and to the entire world community. Just this week, the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency said there were unspecified activities at an Iranian military site which inspectors wanted to visit.

The Iranian regime has publicly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, a major shipping route for Middle Eastern nations to export oil and supply the world's energy needs. This threat by Iran amounts to economic warfare, as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz would trigger spikes in crude oil, gasoline bottlenecks in the supply chain, increased prices for all manufactured goods, and would likely lead to massive increases for gas here in the United States.

At a time when our domestic economy is struggling to recover, the last

thing hardworking Americans need is for gas prices to soar even higher.

While drastic reductions in the supply of crude oil would be devastating to the world economy, the threat of a theocratic, unstable Iranian regime bent on the destruction of Israel and its allies is even worse. A nuclear Iran will not care about economic sanctions. A nuclear Iran will not care about diplomacy. A nuclear Iran will not negotiate in good faith. And a nuclear Iran will not be a friend of the United States.

Perhaps the greatest threat to peace and security in the world is the refusal to heed the warnings of the most violent and dangerous regimes when they tell us what their exact intentions are. My hope is that it will not be a mistake of this Nation, one that this Nation makes with this regime in Tehran. Again, my hope is that it will not be our mistake not to pay attention to the signals from the regime in Tehran.

□ 1030

THE AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND DISEASE REGISTRY DRAFT REPORT ON VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Madam Speaker, I rise to discuss a subject of great importance to me, to the people I represent, and to many of our fellow citizens around the country, and that is the health of nearly 10,000 residents of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

The people of Vieques sacrificed as much as, if not more than, any other U.S. civilian population to advance our military readiness. In the 1940s, the Federal Government expropriated lands on Vieques for use by the Navy. For over 60 years, the Navy conducted training operations on eastern Vieques, including ship-to-shore bombing, aerial bombing, and ground-based exercises. The Navy has reported that it dropped between 3 and 4 million pounds of ordnance on Vieques each year between 1983 and 1998.

Training operations on Vieques ceased in 2003, in part due to concerns about the risks to safety, health, and the environment posed by decades of weapons use. The Navy is now administering the cleanup of Vieques with support from other Federal and local agencies. In 2005, the EPA listed Vieques as one of the most hazardous sites in the U.S. To date, over 35,000 munitions on Vieques have been recovered and destroyed, including at least 19,000 live munitions.

Unfortunately, numerous studies have shown that residents of Vieques have higher rates of cancer and other chronic illnesses than residents of mainland Puerto Rico, raising serious questions about whether there may be a link between those health problems

and the island's long use as a military training range.

In December, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, an agency within HHS, released a draft report that addresses whether there is evidence of a causal relationship between the identified health problems and the Navy's activities. ATSDR examined five "pathways" through which residents of Vieques might have been exposed to harmful contaminants: air, soil, fish, local produce and livestock, and drinking water. The conclusion reached by ATSDR in its draft report is generally the same as the conclusion reached by the agency in a series of controversial public health assessments it conducted on Vieques about a decade ago, specifically, that the available data does not establish that the contaminants in these pathways, some of which can be linked to military activities, were at levels expected to cause the reported health problems.

Because the draft report leaves many crucial questions unanswered, today I'm filing extensive comments that I urge ATSDR to address before its report is finalized. My comments are intended to be constructive, because my constituents deserve a meticulous evaluation of the draft report aimed at producing concrete action by the Federal Government.

In my comments, I note that ATSDR repeatedly acknowledges that its conclusions are not definitive, or even close to it, because the available data upon which the agency relies is incomplete in many respects. While ATSDR recommends that further studies be conducted to fill certain data gaps, the agency does not go far enough.

In 2009, ATSDR stated that it expected to recommend biomonitoring to determine whether, and to what extent, residents have been exposed to harmful chemicals. Yet, in a startling reversal, the agency has now stated that "it is not recommending a comprehensive, systematic biomonitoring effort at this time."

Given the health problems on Vieques and the potential link between those problems and military activities, such an action is misplaced. Therefore, I have urged ATSDR to recommend a comprehensive biomonitoring investigation. More generally, I have encouraged ATSDR and other Federal agencies, working in partnership with independent researchers, to take a more active and assertive role in designing, implementing, and especially funding the additional studies that are still needed to determine the nature and potential causes of the health problems being experienced by residents of Vieques.

It is unacceptable that more than a decade after ATSDR completed its first public health assessments on Vieques, fundamental questions about the safety of the island's environment and the health of its residents remain unanswered. My constituents deserve better.

TOMB OF THE UNKNOWNNS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STIVERS. Madam Speaker, I've served for 26 years in the Ohio Army National Guard and had the pleasure of serving with many brave men and women over the years, including a tour of duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom. As a member of the armed services as well as a Member of Congress, I was shocked and horrified last year by reports of the Dover Air Force Base mortuary sending veterans' remains to the Prince George landfill.

The Washington Post reported on December 7, 2011, that they uncovered "976 fragments from 274 servicemembers that were cremated, incinerated and taken to the landfill between 2004 and 2008." This is an outrage. It disrespects our men and women in uniform, and it can't be allowed to stand.

The first step to fixing this is creating a proper memorial for those who have served our country so well and given their last measure of devotion. I'm working on legislation to create a Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery for every conflict moving forward. This plan will be paid for by taking money from the Air Force, because that's where the poor decisions were made. I plan to introduce this legislation very soon.

To those who have given their final measure of devotion in service to our country, they deserve a final resting place worthy of their dedication, commitment, and devotion, and we need to give that to them.

God bless the United States of America.

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 7, 2011]

AIR FORCE DUMPED ASHES OF MORE TROOPS' REMAINS IN VA. LANDFILL THAN ACKNOWLEDGED

(By Craig Whitlock and Mary Pat Flaherty)

The Air Force dumped the incinerated partial remains of at least 274 American troops in a Virginia landfill, far more than the military had acknowledged, before halting the secretive practice three years ago, records show.

The landfill dumping was concealed from families who had authorized the military to dispose of the remains in a dignified and respectful manner, Air Force officials said. There are no plans, they said, to alert those families now.

The Air Force had maintained that it could not estimate how many troops might have had their remains sent to a landfill. The practice was revealed last month by The Washington Post, which was able to document a single case of a soldier whose partial remains were sent to the King George County landfill in Virginia. The new data, for the first time, show the scope of what has become an embarrassing episode for vaunted Dover Air Base, the main port of entry for America's war dead.

The landfill disposals were never formally authorized under military policies or regulations. They also were not disclosed to senior Pentagon officials who conducted a high-level review of cremation policies at the Dover mortuary in 2008, records show.

Air Force and Pentagon officials said last month that determining how many remains

went to the landfill would require searching through the records of more than 6,300 troops whose remains have passed through the mortuary since 2001.

"It would require a massive effort and time to recall records and research individually," Jo Ann Rooney, the Pentagon's acting undersecretary for personnel, wrote in a Nov. 22 letter to Rep. Rush D. Holt (D-N.J.).

Holt, who has pressed the Pentagon for answers on behalf of a constituent whose husband was killed in Iraq, accused the Air Force and Defense Department of hiding the truth.

"What the hell?" Holt said in a phone interview. "We spent millions, tens of millions, to find any trace of soldiers killed, and they're concerned about a 'massive' effort to go back and pull out the files and find out how many soldiers were disrespected this way?" He added: "They just don't want to ask questions or look very hard."

Senior Air Force leaders said there was no intent to deceive. "Absolutely not," said Lt. Gen. Darrell D. Jones, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for personnel.

This week, after The Post pressed for information contained in the Dover mortuary's electronic database, the Air Force produced a tally based on those records. It showed that 976 fragments from 274 military personnel were cremated, incinerated and taken to the landfill between 2004 and 2008.

An additional group of 1,762 unidentified remains were collected from the battlefield and disposed of in the same manner, the Air Force said. Those fragments could not undergo DNA testing because they had been badly burned or damaged in explosions. The total number of incinerated fragments dumped in the landfill exceeded 2,700.

A separate federal investigation of the mortuary last month, prompted by whistleblower complaints, uncovered "gross mismanagement" and documented how body parts recovered from bomb blasts stacked up in the morgue's coolers for months or years before they were identified and disposed of.

The problems also transpired at a time when the mortuary was shielded from public scrutiny. News coverage of the return of fallen troops to Dover was banned by President George H.W. Bush in 1991 before the first Persian Gulf War. The ban remained until April 2009, when the Obama administration lifted it.

The Air Force said it first cremated the remains and then included those ashes in larger loads of mortuary medical waste that were burned in an incinerator and taken to a landfill. Incinerating medical waste is a common disposal practice but including cremated human ashes is not, according to funeral home directors, regulators and waste haulers.

Air Force officials said they do not know when the landfill disposals began. They said their first record of it is Feb. 23, 2004. The mortuary database became operational in late 2003.

The Air Force said mortuary leaders decided to end the practice in May 2008 because "there was a better way to do it," Jones said. The military now cremates unclaimed and unidentified body parts and buries the ashes at sea.

Jones said the Air Force did not need to inform relatives of troops whose remains ended up in the landfill because they had signed forms stipulating that they did not wish to be notified if additional remains were identified. The forms authorized the military to make "appropriate disposition" of those subsequent remains.

Asked if the landfill was a dignified final resting place, Jones said: "The way we're doing it today is much better."

Gari-Lynn Smith, the widow of an Army sergeant killed in Iraq, said she received an

e-mail in July from Trevor Dean, the mortuary director, saying that incinerated remains had been taken to landfills at least since he began working at Dover in 1996. Dean is one of the officials facing discipline for his role in the reported mismanagement at the mortuary.

Smith's husband, Sgt. 1st Class Scott R. Smith, a member of a bomb-disposal unit, was killed on July 17, 2006. In 2007, she began asking the military what happened to some of his remains that were identified after his funeral.

After four years of letters, phone calls and records requests, she received a letter from the mortuary in April stating that the military cremated and incinerated those partial remains and disposed of them in the King George landfill.

"I hope this information brings some comfort to you during your time of loss," read the letter, signed by Dean.

Smith was infuriated. "They have known that they were doing something disgusting, and they were doing everything they could to keep it from us," she said in a phone interview.

In May 2008, then-Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates ordered a detailed review of policies at Dover after an Army officer complained that the mortuary had cremated a fallen comrade at a nearby funeral home that also cremated pets in a separate chamber.

The review team ordered changes, emphasizing the need to ensure the highest levels of dignity and honor.

The Pentagon would not release the report, which was overseen by David Chu, who was undersecretary of defense for personnel. A copy obtained by The Post, however, shows that the landfill disposal practice was never reviewed or mentioned. Chu, now president of the Institute for Defense Analyses in Alexandria, declined to comment.

Private contractors hired by the Air Force to handle the remains' incineration and disposal of the residue said they were unaware that they were transporting the ashes of dead troops. Records show that the Air Force hired the contractors to dispose of medical waste and did not specify that cremated body parts were included.

MedTrace Inc. of North East, Md., had Air Force disposal contracts between 2004 and 2007, records show. Don Holland, a manager for the company, said his employees picked up boxes of sealed containers from the Dover mortuary.

"They were certified as medical waste that had been properly treated—that's it," Holland said. "We don't go looking at what's in there. It's sealed."

MedTrace took the items to an incinerator in Baltimore, according to state records in Delaware, where the mortuary is located. Holland declined to discuss the incineration and which landfill his company used.

Lisa Kardell, a spokeswoman for Waste Management, which operates the King George landfill, said the firm has no record of a contract with MedTrace for the years 2003 through 2008.

She said that Air Force officials have not returned calls over the past two weeks from her company's attorneys, asking which haulers would have been handling the Dover materials and the disposition of the ashes.

"Obviously, we would be opposed to taking cremated remains of our servicemen and servicewomen and putting them in our landfill," Kardell said. "But it sounds like a lot of us were pulled in unknowingly to this unfortunate situation with the Air Force," she added.

"It's a moral thing," said Jeff Jenkins, the manager of the King George landfill. "Someone killed overseas fighting for our country,